

Principles of Government

Government and Its Purpose

- Government - the institutions, people, and processes by which a nation-state or political unit is ruled and its public policy created and administered.
- Nation-State - a political unit with a defined territory, organized under a government and having the authority to make and enforce the law.
- Territory, Population, Sovereignty, Government

- Politics - The methods or tactics involved in managing government and gaining power.
- Sovereignty - the authority of a state's right to rule itself.

Purpose of Government

- We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, established justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America

- Protection
- Maintenance of public order
- Resolution of social conflicts
- Responsibility for a stable economy
- Provision of public services

Origins of Government

- Evolutionary Theory - government is an extension of family relations. (families - tribes - villages - towns - cities - states - countries)
- Force Theory - one group conquers another.
- Divine Right Theory - rulers inherit their power from God.
- Social Contract Theory - humans developed government and named rulers to establish order in the world. Agreed to cooperate with each other and follow a set of rules.

Forms of Government

- Unitary Government - a form of government in which all of the powers of the government are held by a single unit or agency.
- Federal Government - a form of government in which governmental powers are divided between a central authority and a number of regional political subdivisions.
- Confederate Government - A political system in which a weak central government has limited authority, and the states have ultimate power.

- Parliamentary Government - A form of government in which the executive leaders are chosen by and responsible to the legislature.
- Presidential Government - A form of government in which the legislative and executive branches are separate and function independently.
- Monarchy - government in which the ruler's powers is hereditary.

- Dictatorship - a form of government in which an absolute ruler controls the power, often through fear or force, and ignores the will of the people.
- Democracy - a system of government by the people, exercised either directly or through elected representatives.
- Direct Democracy - a democratic system of government in which all citizens participate in politics and decision-making, such as New England town meetings.

- Representative Democracy - a democratic system of government in which politics are made by officials accountable to the people who elected them.